Moriah Lieberman

Queen’s Garden

Worksheet

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

When/where: The narrator refers to the island in which the play takes place as, ‘the west side’ and the time period is in the 1960’s.

Who: The main character is Brenda who with her siblings at her mother’s pharmacy Kali is introduced shortly after as her Hawaiian boyfriend.

What: Brenda and Kali originally lead their lives together. They go to a predominantly white high school, in which the people are very different from the area where they grew up on the west side. Brenda and Kali soon end up going down separate paths due to differences in prejudice and privilege. Brenda does very well in school, makes friends and sets goals for her future. Unfortunately, Kali ends up joining a gang, which gets him in a lot of trouble down the road. We watch them as they go down very different paths, only to reconnect with each other later in life.

The play is introduced in a theatrical way and kind of merges into the characters acting and interacting more with themselves than the audience. The interaction between the characters, the orchestra, and the audiences melds together to create the show itself.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

The intrusion occurs when Kali comes back into Brenda’s life. We find out that he is a drug dealer, which drives Brenda’s actions and the rest of the events in the play forward.

3. What is the *unique factor*?

The unique factor is what leads to Smoke killing Kali and Auntie Mary. It is the same factor that brought them together at the beginning of the play and made them closer throughout, until they become rivals. It is what gets them into the drug dealing business together and ultimately the source of the deaths in the end.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

Can and will Brenda save Kali? What kind of relationship will they be able to have if she does?

5. Provide an illustration of the *two kinds of exposition* that the play has in it.

All of the characters and the audience know the details Brenda reveals as the narrator before and within each scene.

The details of Kali and his life without Brenda selling drugs are not revealed to anyone, including the audience, until he reveals them to Brenda.

6. Identify the most *theatrical moment* in the play and of what importance it seems to be.

When Auntie Mary is killed in the gun fight between Kali and Smoke, and ultimately Kali is killed by Smoke.

7. List some of the *themes* of the play.

Privilege is a big theme in the play. It is recognized from the very beginning when Brenda separates herself and Kali from others by explaining the ‘west side’ and the others that she is in school with. This is further emphasized in many ways throughout the play. When Brenda is invited to Sherry’s garden party, she makes stereotypical comments and urges Brenda not to reveal where she is from. Additionally the fate of the two main characters, dropping out of college, for one of them becoming a drug dealer and ultimately death, emphasizes the limits in opportunities that may have led them to getting to that point.

Friendship: The bonds of friendship are what keep Kali and Brenda optimistic about their situations in the beginning. This is also what leads Brenda to letting herself back into Kali’s life. The bond they shared was stronger than the adversity faced. However, it was only able to last them for so long.

8. What do the principal characters *want* and what are some *obstacles* that stand in the way of them getting what they want?

Brenda: wants a fair life for herself. She tries to accomplish a sense of equality and power within herself by becoming a teacher and working with others. She just wants a life different than the one she grew up in, away from the west side and sting of white privilege.

Kali: has always wanted to be treated fairly or even superiorly to some of those around him. He sees the way he is being treated as extremely judgmental and inaccurate of who he really is and what he is really capable of. However, he retaliates to this in a completely different way than Brenda and involves himself in the wrong things with the wrong kinds of people.

9. Describe some possible *images* in the play and how does the *title* help us understand the play.

The Queen’s Garden is a huge image in the play. Not only is it where the most dramatic scene in the play takes place, but it emphasizes that although things, not only on the west side, can seem beautiful and perfect and unable to be destroyed, that is not always the case. Smoke and Kali had this brotherhood that helped them feel like they were above any adversity as long as they had each other, and Kali and Brenda had this sort of bond where they wanted the absolute best for one another. Unfortunately in the end neither was strong enough to save Kali from his fate, and to save Smoke from destroying all of those bonds. Brenda’s bond with him was not strong enough to save him. This is all symbolized in the flowers falling and erupting around him and Aunty Mary as they get shot. The garden is left to be less perfect of a place than it was before.

10. Briefly define the *family relationships* that are examined in the play.

Brenda chooses to create a better life for herself, but in doing so she had to leave her family behind and start a life without ties to them. I think it is also evident in how Kali’s future plays out and the people of whom he is influenced by, that the west side was not rich with strong families or familial bonds.